

GENERAL HINTS FOR THE ERADICATION OF POISONOUS PLANTS

Wherever plants known to be poisonous are found, some effort should be made to destroy them, or prevent at least their multiplication. In most cases they may be simply dealt with as weeds, as annuals, biennials, or perennials.

ANNUALS: Annuals, which produce their flowers and seeds in one season, have no other means of propagation than seeds. Therefore any method, best chosen by the individual farmer, which will prevent the production of seeds will exterminate the plant. As the purple cockle, cursed crowfoot and Indian tobacco are all annuals, much loss may be avoided by mere hand-pulling or cutting when these plants are in flower.

BIENNIALS: Biennials, which bloom and ripen their seeds the second year, may be treated as annuals as far as the production of seed is concerned. They will eventually succumb to continued close cutting or to the use of the hoe or spud. Thorough cultivation and drainage where necessary is the better method on large and badly infested areas.

PERENNIALS: Perennials are propagated both by seeds and by underground rootstocks, bulbs, or tubers. The prevention of seed production is quite as important as the destruction of the underground portion of the plant, in many cases, more so, as the numerous light seeds borne to fresh soil will in time produce many more new plants than is possible by the division of the rootstocks. But in other cases, as for instance the water hemlocks, the portion in the soil is the most deadly, and any small piece uprooted and eaten by stock will result in death in a few minutes. Thus it is necessary for the extermination of the species and the safety of human beings as well as animals to destroy all portions of poisonous perennials by the quickest means possible.

SPRAYING: Chemical sprays may be used to advantage; they are economical and effective in most cases. Plants with rough leaves are most susceptible, as the spray clings to the surface more readily. Smooth leaves shed the spray before it has time to take full effect. The spray should be applied in a fine mist on a bright clear day when there is no likelihood of rain undoing the work. Spraying is most effective when the plants are young and succulent, that is, just before they flower or in their first bloom.

COMMON SALT OR SODIUM CHLORIDE: Common salt is one of the cheapest and safest sprays to use. It is most destructive when applied in hot dry weather, as it absorbs the moisture from the plants and the surrounding soil to such an extent that the plants die of thirst. A solution of 150 pounds to 60 gallons of water may be used where all vegetation is to be destroyed it may be applied in the form of hot brine, of such a strength as to show crystals on its surface.